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PHILADELPHIA NO. 1 FREE DAILY IN THE US

Tuesday, February 21, 2017 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

ANGELINA OPENS UP

The actress discusses her painful split with Brad Pitt. 18

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Macnow: Era of losing, ugly Phillies is over. 30

GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE

Longtime defense attorney makes aggressive push to become Philly's top prosecutor. 4

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RUSSIA: TRUMP DOESN'T UNDERSTAND PUTIN

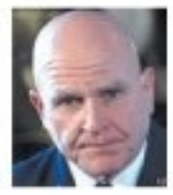
1 A dossier ordered by the Kremlin on President Donald Trump has called him "naive," saying the billionaire businessman "doesn't understand fully" Russian President Vladimir Putin. The report on Trump's psychological makeup is being prepared for Putin ahead of his first meeting with Trump, the date of which has yet to be announced, NBC News reported. Retired diplomats and members of Putin's staff are putting together the dossier, which also stated that many members of Russia's government believe Trump views the presidency as a business. ALEXIS SACHDEV

WASHINGTON PREPARES FOR N. KOREA TALKS

2 Preparations are under way to bring senior North Korean officials to the United States for talks with former U.S. officials, the first such meeting in more than five years, The Washington Post reported on Sunday. The talks would be the clearest indication yet that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un wants to communicate with the new Trump administration. Planning for the "Track 1.5 talks" is still in a preparatory stage, the Post reported, citing multiple people with knowledge of the arrangements. That name, reflecting planned contact between former U.S. officials and current North Korean ones, is a reference to what are known as "Track 2" talks involving former officials on both sides. REUTERS

TRUMP PICKS MCMASTER TOP SECURITY ADVISER

3 President Donald Trump on Monday named Lt. Gen. Herbert Raymond McMaster as his new national security adviser, again turning to the U.S. military to play a central role on his foreign policy team. McMaster is a highly regarded military tactician and strategic thinker, but his selection surprised some observers who wondered how the officer, who is known for questioning authority, would deal with a White House that has not welcomed criticism. "He is highly respected by everybody in the military and we're very honored to have him," Trump told reporters in West Palm Beach where he spent the weekend. "He's a man of tremendous talent and tremendous experience." REUTERS



HEINZ FIELD TRANSFORMATION

5 A general view of Heinz Field during the build-out for the 2017 Coors Light NHL Stadium Series at Heinz Field on Monday in Pittsburgh. GETTY IMAGES

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

TRUMP PROTEST OUTSIDE UK PARLIAMENT

4 Thousands of Donald Trump's opponents gathered outside the British parliament on Monday to protest against a planned state visit while lawmakers debated whether the new U.S. president should be given a lavish meeting with Queen Elizabeth. Britain invited Trump to visit later this year as Prime Minister Theresa May's government seeks to reaffirm the so-called "special relationship" with the United States and secure a trade deal as it prepares to leave the European Union. The planned visit, announced just hours before Trump signed a controversial executive order on immigration, has crystallized opposition in Britain, spurring 1.8 million people to sign a petition saying he should not be afforded the honor of a state visit because it could embarrass the Queen. REUTERS

WELCOME TO METRO.US!

MATT PRIGGE, NATIONAL FILM EDITOR

Do you have "superhero movie fatigue"? So do we. We find that, however delightful movies like "Ant-Man" or "Doctor Strange" are in spots, the Marvel Cinematic Universe has become a tangled mess of too many characters, too much plot and little more than lots of stuff happening. With the unusual "Logan" coming out Friday, we look at how the comic book movie trend isn't going to change for real anytime soon.

PLAY TO WIN

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Every Monday, we pick a random winner from the participants who answered correctly one of the quizzes from the previous week.

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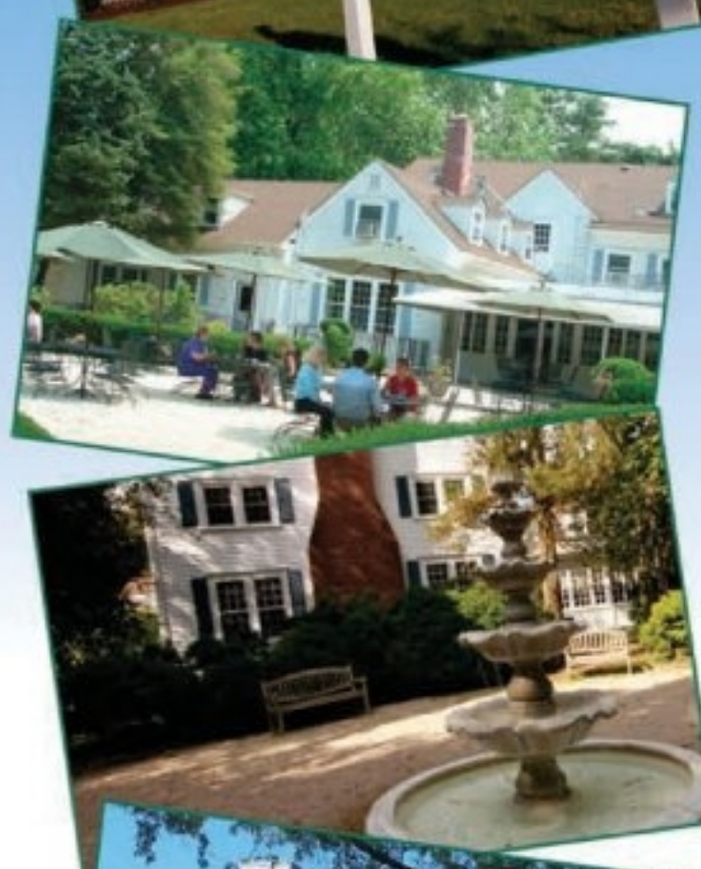
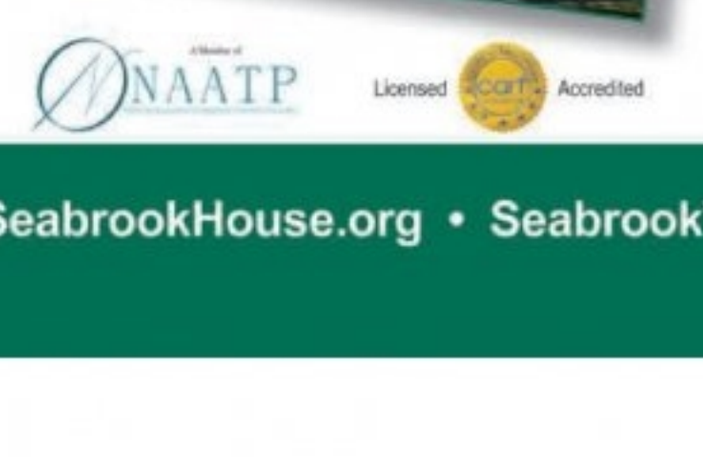
He's worth it.

OVER 40 YEARS OF HELPING FAMILIES FIND THE COURAGE TO RECOVER





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Running to change how Philly does justice

Longtime critic of Philadelphia justice system aims at reform from the inside.

SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
sam.newhouse@metro.us

Attorney Larry Krasner is running for Philadelphia district attorney. CHARLES MOSTOLLER

At first, it's a bit hard to understand why Larry Krasner wants to be district attorney. For years, the defense lawyer has been trashing almost everything about how the Philadelphia DA's office does business.

Krasner blames the DA's office for a world of social ills, from what he called "excessive" sentences that cost $40,000 a year to keep inmates in "crime school" to police actions that "sweep up young black or brown men in poor neighborhoods and treat them all like serious criminals."

He described a client who became a drug addict while serving 12 years for a robbery: "We spent half a million dollars on this guy, and now he's still addicted to drugs, years later. That's 12 years that we weren't paying a public school teacher, when the appropriate sentence was more like five years."

Krasner fumes about prosecutors' use of a cash-bail system that can keep poor people facing charges locked up for months or years before trial, the low funding for fingerprint and DNA evidence analysis, and failures to provide potentially exculpatory evidence to defendants under the constitutional requirement set by the Supreme Court in 1963 in the Brady v. Maryland case.

"This office has paid lip service, at best, to Brady … and they do it because of a culture that flows from the Rizzo era and has been carried forward by this district attorney's office ever since," he said.

Krasner's unorthodox views are getting strong support from some of Philadelphia's most outspoken critics of the criminal justice system.

"He has fought and continues to fight the racist nonstop police brutality epidemic," fellow attorney Michael Coard wrote of Krasner in a column for the Philadelphia Tribune. "He is the blackest white guy I know."

Blacks Lives Matter organizer Asa Khalif is personally endorsing Krasner. He said he wants a DA who will take a stand against police misconduct.

"Larry's going to drop the hammer on these corrupt officers," Khalif said. "I don't care what color the man is. I judge him by his record."

But Krasner thinks most Philadelphia cops' values aren't that far off from the higher standards demanded by groups like Black Lives Matter.

"The vast majority of police want to see police officers who do the wrong thing, whether it's corruption or physical abuse, properly disciplined, reprimanded and when necessary fired or charged," he said.

Rumors are already swirling that billionaire George Soros is looking to invest in the race for the office current DA Seth Williams will soon vacate. Soros has already funded criminal justice reforms and seven DA's races around the country, and some think Krasner could get his support, but that remains a rumor, with neither Krasner's nor Soros' representatives commenting.

Either way, Krasner's stance is likely to remain the farthest to the left in the increasingly crowded DA's race, as he touts his first priority not as locking criminals up, but decarceration.

"You have to look at the collateral consequences of incarceration," he said. "Will it make this person chronically unemployed and drive them toward crime, as opposed to away from crime?"

To people who see the DA as Philly's top enforcer, that attitude might seem strange. But to Krasner, it makes perfect sense.

"For 30 years, I've watched this DA's office go in the wrong direction," Krasner said. "I've done about as much as I can do from the outside to push for justice. … We're the most incarcerated nation in the world. It's time to go in a different direction."

A storied career

Krasner first made waves in Philadelphia in the '90s as a member of the Police Advisory Panel reviewing a 1991 attack by Philly cops on nonviolent protesters with ACT UP, an AIDS advocacy group. More recently, he helped win acquittals for 10 Black Lives Matter-affiliated protesters whose demonstration against former Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey in a recreation center turned into a scuffle.

He represented protesters at the 2000 Republican National Convention and last summer's Democratic National Convention and he won the acquittal of Askia Sabur, who was charged with assaulting police in 2010. Viral cellphone video showed officers whipping him with batons while he sat on the sidewalk.

The contenders

Numerous candidates besides Krasner have entered the race as Democratic candidates for DA in the upcoming May primary. DA Seth Williams announced earlier this month that he won't seek re-election to a third term.

- **Teresa Carr Deni** — former Municipal Court judge
- **Tariq El-Shabazz** — former first assistant district attorney
- **Joe Khan** — former federal prosecutor
- **Richard Negrin** — former city managing director
- **Michael Untermeyer** — former prosecutor

The candidate who wins the primary will face Republican and former prosecutor Beth Grossman in November.

10 ways to keep your kids' teeth healthy

WRITTEN BY
Amy Smith

If left untreated, tooth decay is the most chronic childhood disease—five times more prevalent than asthma, it turns out. The silver lining is that keeping up with regular dental exams can make all the difference.

"A dental examination is as important as immunizations and booster shots," says Jason M. Bresler, D.M.D., a well-respected and experienced Philadelphia pediatric dentist at Doc Bresler's Cavity Busters. "Your children's teeth are as precious as they are."

Once tooth decay takes hold, it can affect your child's ability to eat, speak, sleep, and even learn. (It's recognized as a reason behind school absences.) This is precisely why preventative maintenance and routine dental care is so important. Doing so is what sets the stage for baby teeth to grow into healthy adult teeth.

Ready to supercharge your kids' dental health? Here are Dr. Bresler's top 10 ways to get it right.

1. If you have a little one at home, resist the urge to put them to bed with a bottle of milk or juice. The sugar and bacteria are known cavity-culprits.

2. Keep up with routine dental exams every six months.

3. Let your child know that their dentist and hygienists are their friends.

4. Chat with your pediatric dentist about ways you can help monitor your child's tooth development.

5. Look into fluoride treatments and sealants to help protect your child's teeth.

6. Good habits start at home. As a family, encourage brushing teeth twice daily, as well as flossing nightly. Forgetting to floss means that you're really only cleaning two-thirds of the tooth's surface.

7. When your kiddo is old enough to brush independently, be sure they're using a child-sized soft-bristle toothbrush—and just a pea-sized dab of fluoride toothpaste. Also drive home the rule of spitting out the toothpaste, instead of swallowing it.

8. Good nutrition is the foundation of healthy teeth and gums. This means three healthy meals a day, with healthy snacks sprinkled in between. Seasonal fruits, bright veggies, leafy greens, milk, protein, and yogurt are all great choices. And, of course, don't forget plenty of water.

9. Soda and sugary sports drinks should never enter the equation. Similarly, sugary snacks should

be reserved for special occasions.

10. If your child's an athlete, ask your dentist about getting a mouth guard.

"Remember, a little prevention goes a long way," says Joshua A. Bresler, D.M.D, co-founder of Cavity Busters. "Today's healthy baby teeth are tomorrow's strong, beautiful permanent teeth!"

Founded in 1982, Doc Bresler's Cavity Busters has seven locations throughout Philadelphia and the suburbs, providing experienced, warm and friendly pediatric dentistry to infants, children, teens, and children with special health needs.

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GETTY IMAGES

TRUMP'S AMERICA

I AM AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

ELLIS HENICAN

Opinion

Ellis Henican is a seasoned observer of the nation's political and social landscape. He has appeared as a commentator on CNN, MSNBC and Fox News. He is a former columnist at Newsday. Follow him @henican

You got me, Donald. I confess. I am an enemy of the people — some of the people, that is.

I'm an enemy of the ones who think that facts are made of Silly Putty, that insults are a way to make friends, that immigrants make our country weaker, that judges are only "so-called," that Sweden's the latest terror tragedy and that Russian's thuggish Vladimir Putin is a really, really swell guy.

Yes, I'm definitely an enemy of them.

Like most of us in what Donald Trump relishes in terming the "fake news media," I'm a call-'em-like-I-see-'em type, someone who will never sit silently and allow a pandering politician to award himself straight A's.

"A well-oiled machine?" More like a demolition derby — and Donald's blindly driving all the cars.

The reason we won't stay silent is a simple one, and the First Amendment to the Constitution is only part of it. There's a more practical part: We know how to tell the truth, and he doesn't. The way things are going one month in, we "enemies of the American people" will never get to rest.

So much happened this weekend, two days wasn't nearly enough to hold it all. We had to add a third one, which people immediately began calling Not My President's Day. At rallies across America, in Europe and beyond, people had a much-needed chance to review: The president's "enemies" crack. The "terrorist" refugees in Sweden. Vice President Mike Pence's Please-Don't-Listen-to-Donald speech at the NATO summit in Munich. A new general, a better general, in as national security adviser, replacing the Russia-loving Mike Flynn. The giant sigh of relief that über-hawk John Bolton didn't land that important job, then a gasp when Trump promised to find him another.

As with Memorial Day, you couldn't say Happy Not My President's Day. This first national holiday of the Trump administration was something to commemorate more than celebrate.

Taken together, the crowds at the anti-Trump rallies were far larger than the one that gathered for a Trump campaign pep rally on Saturday in Melbourne, Florida. And with each loud cheer, the "enemies list" grew a few names longer.

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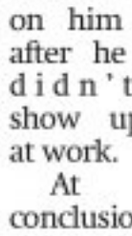
Janice Matthews, left, holds a picture of her son Austin Sternberg, who died from an overdose on heroin laced with fentanyl in 2016, outside of court after the dealer who sold the drugs was sentenced to 16½ to 30 years, along with Sternberg's wife Maura, right. Photo: SAM NEWHOUSE

Dealer who sold fatal fentanyl dose sentenced to upward of 30 years

Overdose victim's heartbroken mother: "Justice was done."

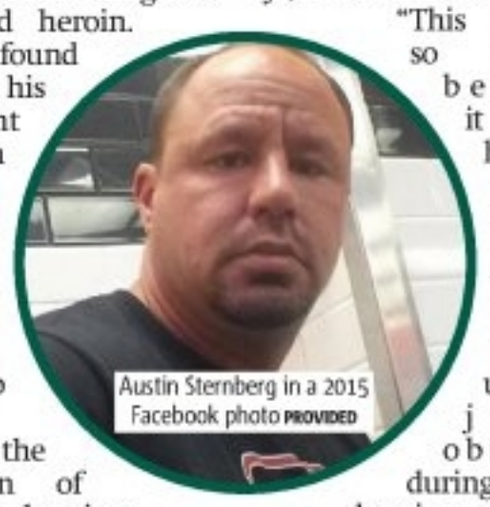


SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
sam.newhouse@metro.us

Janice Matthews vividly recalled the afternoon phone call from the medical examiner's office a little more than a year ago that left her momentarily stunned.

"At 12:56 p.m. on Jan. 28, I got a call from the medical examiner's office asking me if I had a son," she testified Friday in court. "I couldn't put it together at first. Then she said he's died."

Her son, Austin Sternberg, died Jan. 27, 2016, at age 39 after using fentanyl-laced heroin. He was found dead in his apartment when friends came to check on him after he didn't show up at work.



Austin Sternberg in a 2015 Facebook photo PROVIDED

At the conclusion of the court hearing, Antonio Moreno, 27, who sold the heroin to Sternberg was sentenced to 16½ to 30 years in prison.

Moreno apologized at the sentencing and claimed he didn't know he was selling heroin laced with fentanyl, an opioid that has been blamed for a surge in fatal overdoses in Philadelphia and across the country.

That didn't stop Judge Rayford Means from handing down the maximum consecutive sentence on charges of possession with intent to distribute and violations of probation for previous arrests.

Friends and family of Sternberg gave emotional testimony about the impact of his death at the sentencing.

After his funeral services, Matthews started putting together a timeline of her son's last days. She took pictures of baggies in his apartment with a red smiley face stamped on them and found his last text message to an unknown number, asking, "Can I get two?"

She provided that phone number to the Philadelphia Police Department. An undercover police officer testified at the hearing that he called the number and Moreno answered, later agreeing to sell him heroin in baggies stamped with that same red smiley face on Aramingo Avenue near Somerset Street in Port Richmond. After they arrested Moreno, those bags tested positive for fentanyl, the officer testified.

"This case is so unusual because it never happens like this — the phones, the packets match up," the judge observed during the hearing. "I have never had a case like this in my life where the dots are connected. ... The evidence is overwhelming. This should have been a homicide."

Friends and family recalled Sternberg as a work-out enthusiast, animal lover and kind person. The George Washington High School graduate also spent some time at Archbishop Ryan High School. He later graduated from La Salle University and pursued work in accounting, his family said, while battling addictions.

Moreno's family was in attendance too, including his children, who wept after hearing their father's sentence.

For more information about the sentencing, visit metro.us.

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Brian Jones
President, Strayer University.

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SUSTAINING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

I will never forget my first REAL job. I was in 7th grade and employed after school by the Landis Cardboard Box Company.

I did all sorts of odd jobs inside and outside of the factory. The jobs were not really that big of a deal in the grand scheme of things, but the paycheck most certainly was. It wasn't so much the money as it was the feeling that I had, at the age of 13, self-worth and achievement.

In fact, I can still remember that very first paycheck. I had never seen my full name typed before, yet there it was, "ROBERT WONDERLING," peering back at me through the window of an envelope. Wow! What a memory. More importantly, though, was the experience I got from that job that laid the groundwork for my future career.

We may think that 13 years old, or even younger, is too young to start thinking about a future career, but it is now more vital than ever to foster necessary skills at an early age that will one day be needed for our jobs of the future. In Philadelphia, an estimated 22 percent of people lack basic literacy skills necessary to get a job.

The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia is a part of numerous different initiatives to help build Philadelphia's future workforce. We are partnering with PNC Bank and the School District of Philadelphia to host our 13th Annual Read to Me Storyteller Event on May 19, where participating storytellers will spend the morning reading to a classroom of Philadelphia school children.

Contributions for the event will provide new and refurbished classroom libraries and bookbags to low-income schools for the 2017-18 school year, teacher workshops for best practices on early literacy, and reading tips to parents and caregivers.

Another initiative that the Chamber is facilitating, in partnership with Wells Fargo and the School District of Philadelphia, is Future Ready, a program that will engage Philadelphia middle school students with future career opportunities and the paths to take to get them there. The goal of the program is to provide students with in-classroom instruction followed by a unique experience where they have the opportunity to visit a local company to meet and interact with professionals in a workplace environment.

There are ways that you can join us as we begin to lay the groundwork for Philadelphia's future workforce: sign up to become a Read to Me storyteller, invest in becoming a host company for Future Ready, or connect with Philadelphia Youth Network to hire a summer intern.

Rob Wonderling is president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia.

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While on some hypnotic sleep medications, you can walk, talk, eat drink, have sex. ... You just might not remember it the next day. ISTOCK

THE INSOMNIAC FILES

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES, AMBIEN

OPINION

KIMBERLY M. AQUILINA
@KimESTAqui

Continuing my search for sleep, I tried melatonin. I tried sunlamps on timers upon waking. I tried yoga, tying my worries to imaginary balloon strings and letting the balloons lift my mental woes away. I tried various chemical methods, including a suggestion by a friend to drink a glass of red wine really fast and then lie down. (She is not a doctor.)

Therapy has helped and, at the risk of going all "Valley of the Dolls," I tried Xanex, Ativan and even the mother of all sleeping pills, Ambien.

The trick with Ambien is to take it and lie down immediately so you're asleep before the hypnotic effect takes place, but when washing your face and getting into PJs makes you anxious every night, you might "out awake" your pretty little pill much like I did and discover — upon waking — that the chicken nuggets you were going to take to work for lunch are mysteriously missing from the refrigerator.

A few years ago, I found myself taking a 3 a.m. jog — in my nightgown — through the Upper East Side. If you know me, you know there could be a rabid Doberman behind me and I wouldn't run. Cujo could be ready to pounce and laziness would overtake my fight or flight response and my "OK, dog. You got me," response would win.

And when the doctor says, "No alcohol with Ambien," believe it. Remember my friend (the one who isn't a doctor)? Let's just say allegedly drinking a glass of red while on Ambien only makes you forget you drank that glass so you (allegedly) pour another. Or so I've been told.

There are other options for those of us who have a hard time switching our brains off and none of them involve a 3 a.m. pajama-clad run.

Next week, we'll talk hypnosis. I tried a pocket watch-less session with a hypnotherapist in Manhattan. Did it work? Check back next Tuesday!

FRAT PROBLEMS

Penn State frat banned for five years after death of intoxicated 19-year-old member

A Penn State fraternity has had its chapter recognition revoked while officials investigate the death of an intoxicated underage member.

Beta Theta Pi has been banned for "no less than five years and may be made permanent upon completion of the criminal and University investigations now underway," the school said in a statement Friday.

Sophomore engineering major Timothy Piazza, 19, died earlier this month after falling down the stairs during a party at the frat house. The student from Lebanon, New Jersey, was intoxicated, and help was not called for about 12 hours after his fall, authorities said, according to Philly.com.

"We cannot suitably convey the heartbreak we feel for the family and friends who are grieving the loss of Tim Piazza," Vice President of Student Affairs Damon Sims said. "The information available to us about the actions that led to Tim's death is deeply disturbing, and no sanction or restriction the University can levy is equal to the gravity of his death or the circumstances which we believe led to it." NIKKI M. MASCALI

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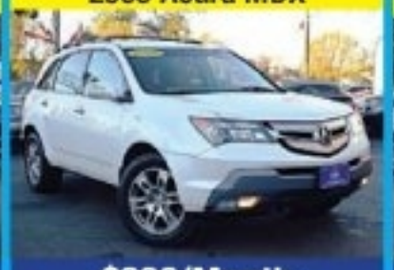

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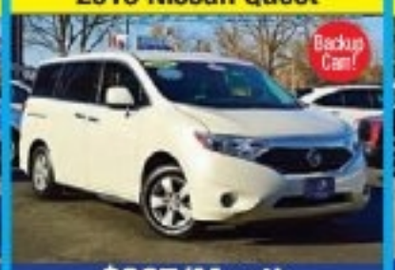

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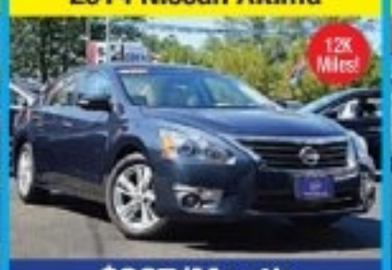

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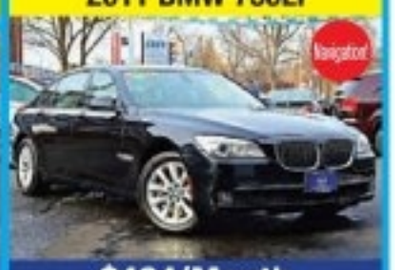

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France's 'Spiderman' jailed for 8 years for $106 million art heist

Vjeran Tomic, who has been convicted in the case of the 2010 theft of five masterpieces from the Paris Modern Art Museum, arrives to his trial on Jan. 30 at a courthouse in Paris. GETTY IMAGES

A criminal known as "Spiderman" was jailed for eight years on Monday for stealing five paintings worth 100 million euros ($106 million) from a Paris museum.

Vjeran Tomic, 49, told investigators he broke into the Musee d'Art Moderne in May 2010 intending to take works by Fernand Leger and Amedeo Modigliani.

When he entered the premises, he found there was no alarm system worth speaking off and he widened his haul to include paintings by Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Georges Braque.

Investigators later established the security system was indeed defective.

Tomic already had 14 convictions for jewelry and art thefts, many of them involving agility in scaling walls to break into apartments — a record which had earned him the underworld nickname of Spiderman.

Two other men, antiquarian Jean-Michel Corvez and Yonathan Birn, a dealer in clocks, were sentenced to seven years and six years, respectively, for handling the paintings.

The three men were handed hefty fines — 200,000 euros for Tomic and 150,000 euros for the others.

They were also collectively ordered to pay back the total value of the paintings — put at 104 million euros — to the city of Paris.

Birn said during the trial that he had thrown the paintings away. None has been recovered and investigators appear to believe they are no longer in France. REUTERS

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‘Not My President’s Day’: Thousands rally in Columbus Circle, 28 US cities

Protesters during a ‘Not My President Day’ demonstration outside City Hall in Los Angeles on Monday. GETTY IMAGES

Yet another nationwide protest against President Donald Trump flared on the Presidents Day holiday Monday, with angry people taking to the streets in dozens of cities in “Not My President’s Day” rallies.

Protest leaders had said they expected thousands to rally in about 28 cities ranging from Los Angeles and Chicago to Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the latest round of demonstrations to express displeasure with Trump’s policies and pronouncements.

The idea for the Presidents Day protests originated in Los Angeles, where about 4,300 people had said on Facebook they would attend a City Hall rally, according to organizers, and it spread to other locales via social media.

In downtown Chicago, about 1,200 people gathered across the Chicago River from the Trump International Hotel and Tower. Signs spotted in the crowd included “My Body My Choice” and “Jesus was a refugee,” references to Trump’s anti-abortion stance and his efforts to stop admission of refugees.

As people gathered, a group of 25 local musicians called themselves #SAHBRA, “Sousaphones Against Hate, Baritones Resisting Aggression,” played songs to lighten the mood.

With Monday being a day off for many schools, many parents brought their children to the protest.

Eileen Molony, a photographer from Oak Park, had her 12-year-old son and 9-year old daughter in tow.

“As an immigrant family we feel strongly against the ban,” she said. “We feel America is about inclusion, but everything Trump has shown is that he’s about division.”

Chicago police reported no arrests at the rally, the latest in a series since Trump’s Jan. 20 inauguration.

Recent anti-Trump protests have included a “general strike” on Friday, a day after thousands of immigrants across the United States stayed away from work and school to highlight the contributions of foreign-born residents to the economy. REUTERS

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Russia's UN envoy Churkin dies suddenly in New York City

Vladimir Putin was deeply upset by the news and had greatly valued Churkin's professionalism and diplomatic talent.

Russia's combative ambassador to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, died suddenly in New York on Monday after being taken ill at work, the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

The ministry gave no details on the circumstances of his death but offered condolences to his relatives and said the diplomat had died one day before his 65th birthday.

It declined to comment on reports that Churkin had been taken to a hospital shortly before his death.

A U.S. government official, who was not authorized to speak publicly on the case, said that Churkin had died of an apparent heart attack.

A federal law enforcement official, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said that there appeared to be nothing unusual about the ambassador's death.

The New York Post quoted unnamed sources as saying Churkin had been rushed to a Manhattan hospital from the Russian embassy after falling ill with a cardiac condition.

Russia's Tass news agency quoted Churkin's deputy, Pyotr Ilyichev, as saying: "The loss sustained by Russia is grave and irreplaceable.

"Ambassador Churkin remained at his work post until the last minute. He devoted his whole life to defending the interests of Russia and was to be found on the very front lines and in the most stressful posts."

Russian Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin GETTY IMAGES

Foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Facebook: "Great diplomat. Extraordinary personality. Colorful man."

Churkin was a pugnacious defender of Russian policy, notably its intensive bombing of the Syrian city of Aleppo last year to crush rebels opposed to President Bashar al-Assad.

When then-U.S. envoy to the United Nations, Samantha Power, accused Syria, Russia and Iran last year of bearing responsibility for atrocities there, Churkin said she was forgetting the United States' own track record in the Middle East.

"The weirdest speech to me was the one by the U.S. representative who built her statement as if she is Mother Teresa herself. Please, remember which country you represent. Please, remember the track record of your country," he said.

"In my short time at the United Nations, Ambassador Vitaly Churkin showed himself to be a gracious colleague."

Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the world body

Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for the U.N. secretary-general's office, on Monday said: "He has been such a regular presence here that I am actually quite stunned. Our thoughts go to his family, to his friends and to his government." REUTERS

RELIGION & ART

Vatican and Rome's Jewish community to host landmark menorah exhibition

The Vatican and Rome's Jewish museum will jointly host an unprecedented exhibition on the menorah, the ancient symbol of Judaism, and try to put to rest legends on the fate of one candelabra missing for 15 centuries.

The May 15-July 23 exhibition will be held simultaneously in St. Peter's Square and in the Rome synagogue complex.

It will include about 130 menorah or depictions of them in paintings, ancient gravestones and sculptures, and medieval and Renaissance illustrations and manuscripts.

Nearly 20 world museums have contributed pieces.

"It will be significant from both the religious as well as the historical aspects," said Barbara Jatta, who last month became the first woman to head the Vatican Museums.

But the absolute star of the show, the solid gold menorah taken as a trophy by the Romans when they destroyed the temple in Jerusalem in the year A.D. 70, won't be there. Its fate has been a mystery for 1,500 years and the temple vessel has become the stuff of legends. REUTERS

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Angelina Jolie finally breaks her silence about Brad Pitt

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

On Sunday, BBC World News released an interview with Angelina Jolie from Cambodia, and the actress-slash-philanthropist-slash-really-chill-lady opened up about her life, her family and — oh, yeah! — her messy divorce from Brad Pitt.

According to People, Jolie revealed in the interview that this has been a trying time for her family. When asked about the split, she said, "I don't want to say very much about that, except to say it was a very difficult time and … and we are a family and we will always be a family, and we will get through this time and hopefully be a stronger family for it."

The 41-year-old was in Cambodia promoting her latest directorial effort, "First They Killed My Father."

Priscilla Presley cares for Lisa Marie's daughters amid scandal

Priscilla Presley has confirmed that her twin granddaughters, Finley and Harper, are in her custody.

Rumors swirled that the girls, aged 8, had been put into foster care, but Priscilla took to Facebook to clear things up. "There is lots of confusion, commotion and concern from all the talk circulating," she wrote. "Let me put this to rest … the girls have not been in foster care and never will be. The girls have been with me and will be until all this is sorted out."

The news comes as their father faces child-abuse accusations.

The girls' mother, Lisa Marie Presley, claimed that she found disturbing photos and videos of children on the computer of her estranged husband, Michael Lockwood. Documents detailing the accusations were filed as part of the couple's ongoing divorce.

The filing makes no mention of why the children were allegedly taken from the custody of both parents in the first place.

Here's hoping that this awful situation is resolved sooner rather than later.

the word

RACHAEL CLEMMONS
rachael.clemmons@metro.us

Lindsay Lohan would love a role in a live-action 'Little Mermaid,' please

After scrubbing her Instagram of all photos for no particular reason, Lindsay Lohan is back! And she's ready for her next role.

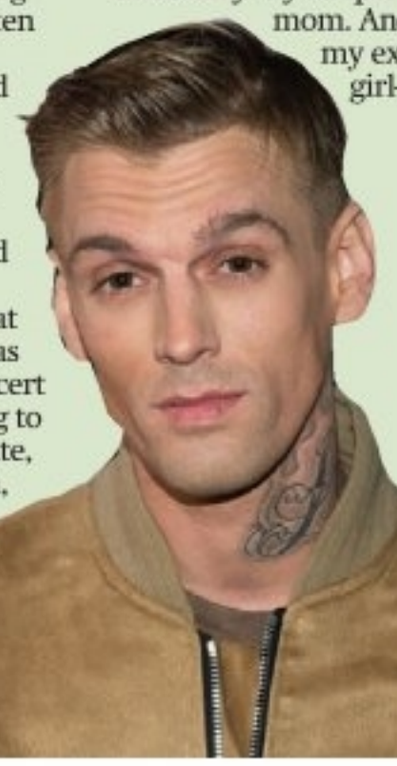
The aspiring philanthropist posted a selfie next to an image of Ariel from Disney's "The Little Mermaid" that has everyone wondering: Why did she do that, exactly?

Lohan has since edited the post, which originally read: "I will sing again, as #ariel #thelittlemermaid [if] @Disney approve that #billcondon directs it." She really has a handle on those hashtags, huh?

So she wants to star in a live-action "Little Mermaid" film. Crazier things have happened. You have to admit that the former child actress and the cartoon princess have a strikingly similar look, and actually? A whole lot in common. I mean, Ariel is a hoarder with a short attention span and a variety of questionable friends. And Lindsay Lohan is … herself.

Of course, Lohan is no stranger to singing. It's been a decade since the 30-year-old released her last solo single, and her song "Rumors" has been stuck in my head for 13 whole years.

Aaron Carter confuses racism and jealousy



In a bid for relevance, Aaron Carter is telling anyone who will listen exactly why he got punched in the head this weekend.

The former teen-nybopper — whose greatest claim to fame is having dated Lindsay Lohan and Hilary Duff, maybe at the same time — was attacked after a concert in Illinois. According to Perez Hilton, ILL State, a Hispanic musician, punched the 29-year-old twice for taunting him by saying, "Bye, Felipe."

Fans jumped to Carter's defense when media outlets criticized him for being racist.

But also? He can't be racist because he has Mexican friends, OK?

"[I have a] 100% Mexican manager and she is basically my adopted mom. And my ex-girlfriend Myra 3rd generation Mexican," he tweeted, even though Myra did not ask to be dragged into this.

It's also common knowledge that the best way to convince people that you're not racist is to remind everyone you have a vague grasp of another language, so he continued: "I also learned Spanish so I could speak with her parents who weren't fluent in English." BYE, AARON.

This isn't the first time Carter started drama for no reason. In 2013, he made up a fantastical tale about being beat up by grown men who happened to be New Kids on the Block fans. That's literally the best thing he could come up with. Ignorance really is such sweet bliss.

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What it's like to be punched by Ice Cube (on accident)

Charlie Day got a couple bruises making the new comedy "Fist Fight."

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Charlie Day plays a teacher who accidentally pisses off a colleague played by Ice Cube in "Fist Fight." BOB MAHONEY

Charlie Day likes playing smart. He doesn't do it often. Since 2005, he's filed over 100 episodes as Charlie, the dim-wittiest of the four monsters on "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia." But in "Fist Fight," Day gets to play a teacher. He's no inspirational educator. His school has long been plagued by crippling cutbacks, the kids are all rambunctious, and — worst of all — he pissed off a colleague (Ice Cube), who's challenged him to an after-school fight.

GETTY IMAGES

So, what's it like being punched by Ice Cube, or at least fake-movie-punched?
It's surreal! I'm a huge fan of Ice Cube, from when he was in NWA and his solo stuff. So it was surreal. And when you get a punch wrong, when it accidentally hits your forearm or something instead of missing you, it really hurts. He's a big guy; he can throw a real punch.

So Ice Cube accidentally punched you in the arm?
There were plenty of times that happened. There were times when our forearms clashed, our knees banged together. Thank God no one got one on the nose by accident. We were both a little black-and-blue in some spots. We shot this over a year ago, and to be honest, my legs still hurt.

You've done stunts, but this is next-level.
It was the most physically demanding and exhausting thing I've ever done. My wife was saying, "You're not allowed to ever do any stunts again." I said, "I don't want to." And we shot it consecutively. We wound up shooting the entire fight in a row because they were worried that the trees were going to lose all their leaves. If we put it off the fight wouldn't match. So it was all day, every day, 12- to 14-hour days of fighting, eight days in a row.

That sounds horrible.
Yeah, it was a really bad idea.

Back to school

Tell me about playing a teacher and having to say inspirational things to rooms of kids.
It was fun for me. I'm the son of two teachers. I always enjoy when I get to play a character who's ... smart. [Laughs]

You should play more smart characters. You got to play one in "Pacific Rim": an excitable scientist who babbles gobbledygook.
The problem with playing a scientist in a movie where giant monsters are coming out of the sea is learning all that mumbo-jumbo. You have to learn some BS science and know what it means.

So you wouldn't just memorize the words and not know what it means?
No, no. I have to give myself a meaning in my head for what each term meant. I had to believe I understood the science behind it. If it's just words, I won't remember them.

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Nat Wolff is no James Franco

The actor can't memorize lines the way his "In Dubious Battle" co-star and director can.

MATT PRIGGE
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matt.prigge@metro.us

Nat Wolff and James Franco play union organizers trying to survive 1933 in Franco's adaptation of John Steinbeck's "In Dubious Battle," now on VOD. MOMENTUM PICTURES

Nat Wolff and James Franco go back. In 2013, the young actor made waves with his uncontainable turn in "Palo Alto," based on Franco's short story collection about bored California high schoolers. The two swore they'd work together again, and after some failed projects, they finally have. Wolff co-stars in "In Dubious Battle," based on John Steinbeck's novel and directed by Franco himself. The two play Depression-era union organizers who try to save a pack of California apple pickers being cheated out of their wages by a crooked and murderous capitalist (Robert Duvall).

GETTY

James Franco is famous for always having his head in books, even on film sets and even in between takes. How does he handle reading while directing and starring in a movie?

He's crazy. He'll have some 800-page historical novel open on his lap, and he'll be directing and acting. Then he'll have a speech to give, [and they'll have] had to change the day of shooting, so he doesn't have it memorized. He'll look at it for two seconds and he'll have it down. He's a freak of nature.

Can you do anything remotely like that?

For me, acting takes up all my concentration. So I'm blown away by his ability.

It's strange watching "In Dubious Battle" now, with its union uprising, all while people outside theaters are protesting.

One of my friends saw this movie and he said there was a line he heard in a Bernie Sanders speech. We're still fighting the exact same issues. When I was driving to interviews today, there were a bunch of people protesting about the Dakota Access Pipeline, fighting for what's right. That's exactly what this movie's about. It was relevant a couple years ago when I signed up, but it's even more relevant now.

All of a sudden we're all activists.

For some reason, my generation has been largely quiet and asleep in a lot of ways, socially and politically. This disaster has woken everyone up a bit. That's probably the only good thing to come out of it. It's starting to affect us. People didn't feel the effects until they were shoved in our faces.

Were you political before this huge mess happened?

I came of age during the Obama years, which was a relatively good time for young people — people that tend to lean left. But it seems this is the first time my generation that we're really engaged. My parents have been through f—ed up times — not to this extent, not more than now.

Junior high school musicals

Wolff wasn't always a name. Back in junior high, he was in a production of "Annie." He didn't play Daddy Warbucks. "I was a bunch of insignificant characters. I didn't get the parts I wanted," the actor recalls. Among them was Bert Healy, the singing radio announcer, FDR and, as it happens, one of the female orphans, because his school had more boys than girls.

"I was kind of show-stoppingly brilliant — literally show-stoppingly brilliant, because I would improvise and people couldn't remember their lines after I was done," he says. "I think I just needed more attention than I was getting."

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Drew Barrymore: 'Sheila saved my life'

The actress and producer surprised the world with her TV debut in a show nobody expected to see.

LUCÍA HERNÁNDEZ
Metro World News
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Drew Barrymore makes her TV debut with a series for Netflix called "Santa Clarita Diet" where she plays Sheila, a real estate agent that turns into a zombie overnight. How will this affect the lives of a suburban family in California? The 41-year-old actress chats with Metro about the series and shares her experience filming it.

"Santa Clarita Diet" is fun and at the same time disgusting. What was the intention of all of this?

I believe that the series has a certain optimism that if you surpass the blood or the vomit, you discover in the plot a sweetness, an optimism and a certain function of the family that is the base of the plot and that was what attracted me to the project. It gave me that emotional factor and so the blood, the gore is just part of the fun for me — more than just being something dark and disgusting. It's funny. Scary is seeing a neighbor spying on you out the window — that scares me. I have a friend who told me she did not know if she could endure so much gore, and I felt like Sheila and told her "Get over it, you coward."

Drew Barrymore stars in the "Santa Clarita Diet." NETFLIX

What has been the most disgusting thing you've had to eat?

I worked very closely with the special-effects team. They always gave me different things. Every day on set I was wondering, what will they give me to eat today? There was everything from liquid cake, dehydrated apples or an edible garter that tasted sweet. One day there was soup from a large corporation that I will not name.

Was it fat-free? Because you were just saying how during shooting you were trying to lose weight...

Well, that's my job. Definitely the things I got on set had more calories than what I was eating

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Drew Barrymore chows down as a zombie. NETFLIX

with my diet, but I had to do it. And I really did, I loved it. The fact that I had to take showers before getting into the car every night at the end of the day cracked me up.

Did you get an idea of what it was going to be like from your first script reading? How did you find out that you were going to eat humans?

When I received the script, I was at a time when I did not want to work. So it was not that they were throwing scripts at me and I was turning them down, but I was more concentrated on creating and producing. But my agent and my partner spent months almost hitting me with this script, asking me to read it. It was not my plan to work — I wanted to stay home with my daughters. But when I read it, they convinced me because it was something different and fresh. It took me out of a very sad moment in my life that was happening: my divorce. Reading the script was fun, it gave me joy and made me laugh. It was touching at the same time. And I immediately agreed to participate in Santa Clarita. And now I must admit that I was very fortunate. Sheila made my life so much better. She woke me up. She's awesome. I like her.

So, you were the last to arrive to the show?

I was the last one, but I really wanted to work with these guys. I was lucky to be invited to this party.

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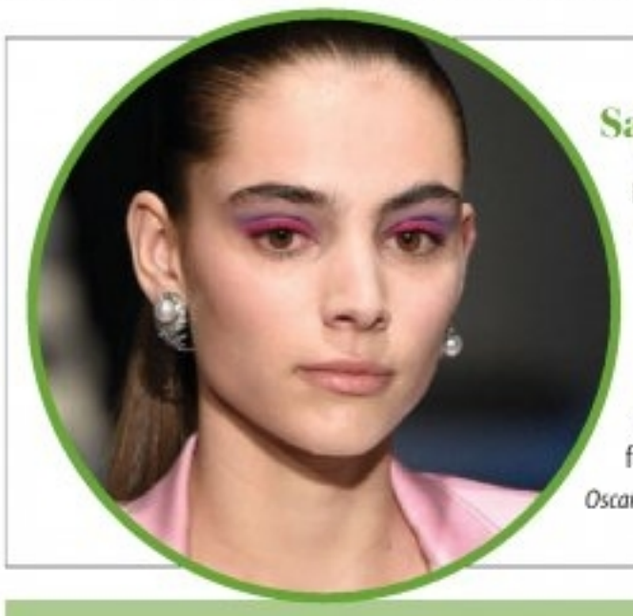
Face forward

New York Fashion Week's fall beauty trends are so good, you'll want to wear them now. RACHEL RACZKA



Say it with your eyes

Bold hues and graphic design once again dominated fall 2017 runways. Prabal Gurung's geometric shapes in pops of bright blue and neon green framed models' bare lid eyes. Oscar de la Renta contrasted society-ready gowns with punky statement eyes. Washes of turquoise or amber covered models' lids, some of which were further layered with sharp hot-pink liner.

Oscar de la Renta's neon lids

Washed out

Thakoon and Public School both incorporated gradient berry-stained pouts, a popular Korean trend that seems to be finally creeping into the States. For Public School, Maybelline New York's Grace Lee has an alternate explanation for the whisper of burgundy left behind: "A girl had on a deep red, but has been out all day and hasn't touched it up." She created the look by smudging a deep red across balm-prepped lips with her finger, before adding a touch of wine lipstick (Maybelline's Midnight Merlot) to the center.

Berry-stained gradient lips at Public School

Make it matte-r

Put down the strobing set and highlighting cream—fashion is leaning toward a clean, shine-free finish for fall. Models at Brock Collection, Ryan Roche, Victoria Beckham and Michael Kors all looked as flawless, healthy and buffed-dry as the teen star of a Neutrogena ad. Make a note: Diffusing powers are about to become your new best friend.

Clean matte skin dominated Brock Collection

Get crafty

Models at the Jonathan Simkhai show had a single tiny pearl or Swarovski crystal placed in the inner corner of their eyes. At Tadashi Shoji, models channeled Twiggy with sparkling loose glitter above heavily mascaraed lower lashes. And at Christian Siriano, MAC artist Polly Osmond gave models trails of glittering copper tears. Her inspiration: post-apocalyptic glam.

Sparkling lower lashes at Tadashi Shoji

How low can you go?

Lazy girls get excited: the low pony is making a strong, chic comeback. Carolina Herrera, Jason Wu and Altuzarra are just some of the shows that models pulled their hair back into low-hanging, sleek ponytails. Call it our easiest and most favorite hair hack of them all!

Jason Wu's low ponytails are easy to copy at home

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5 Biggest trends from NYFW

Here's what you'll be wearing next fall.

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Inclusivity dominated New York Fashion Week. Designers (finally) cast diverse lineups that reflected real women, meaning models of various ethnicities, sizes and ages walked the runway. Responding to our tense political times, the fashion set also used the spotlight to make political statements galore, such as slogan T-shirts at Prabal Gurung and Christian Siriano.

And amid the powerful messages, we saw strong collections for fall. Here are the top trends.

REBECCA TAYLOR

Velvet

Hold tight to the velvet pieces you invested in last season. The plush fabric was a designer favorite for fall. "Velvet feels so bold and luxurious," says Rebecca Taylor. "I particularly love printing on velvet. The floral printed velvet jumpsuit we did has an almost optical effect, which feels modern and feminine."

Seen at
Jason Wu
Dion Lee
Altuzarra

CALVIN KLEIN

Americana

Designers like Raf Simons (for his lauded debut at Calvin Klein) paid homage to the country's sartorial history. Some of their favorites style cues: Western shirts, varsity elements, prairie dresses and, of course, cool denim.

Seen at
Coach 1941
Alexander Wang
Marc Jacobs

CHRISTIAN SIRIANO

Pantsuits

Call it the Hillary Clinton effect — both tailored and billowing pantsuits owned the runway. The future is still female.

Seen at
Victoria Beckham
Alice + Olivia
3.1 Phillip Lim

ROSIE ASSOULIN

Plaid

Go beyond your '90s-inspired flannel. Checks, tartan and ginghams were everywhere, and the best looks came head-to-toe in the season's It-print.

Seen at
Tory Burch
Tracy Reese
Tome

GABRIELA HEARST

Fringe and feathers

Getting ready for a night on the town is going to be anything but basic with designers embellishing skirts and dresses with swinging fringe and opulent feathers.

Seen at
Michael Kors
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How to cope with Trump-induced anxiety

Some who are experiencing anxiety about Trump's presidency can find relief and community in activism. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

What to do when politics sparks a national mental health crisis.

KATE MOONEY
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It's only been a month since Trump's inauguration, but things are moving quickly. Each day sees an avalanche of extreme executive orders, controversial cabinet appointments and nationwide protests that have many Americans feeling emotionally charged and agitated.

Pre-election stress was a widespread (and bipartisan) phenomenon, with the American Psychological Association reporting more than half of Americans were experiencing election-induced anxiety in the days leading up to Nov. 8. You could call our current plight "postinauguration stress" — but four years of mass high anxiety is not sustainable.

Maryland therapist Steven Stosny, who coined the term "election stress disorder," now refers to our nation's affliction as "headline stress disorder."

"For many people, continual alerts from news sources, blogs, social media and alternative facts feel like missile explosions in a siege without end," Stosny writes in the Washington Post.

Dr. Ellen Slawsby, an assistant clinical professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, agrees that the nonstop exposure to the news cycle is overwhelming.

"There's so much news coming in, the brain and the body can't handle it," she says. "If you just let it all flow in like a wild ocean tide, you're going to drown."

Limit your news intake

Slawsby, also director of chronic pain services at Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital, says that in patient sessions, "the election has come up much more than I've ever seen in my 25 years in practice."

She urges her patients, who are seeing symptoms of chronic illness exacerbated by political anxieties, to regulate how much news they consume. While many of us constantly scroll Twitter or set push notifications on our phones — with the exception of folks who work in breaking news media — that's a choice that we're making.

She recommends instead setting aside a time to read the news; maybe 20 minutes in the morning or at the end of the day.

Prioritize health and self-care

Dr. Danielle Ofri, an internist at Bellevue Hospital, is a primary care physician, but she says she ends up devoting in her appointments to discuss her patients' anxieties about the current administration.

Many of her patients are immigrants, she says, who are concerned about what their future looks like under Trump.

"In our visits, diabetes and heart disease are pushed aside as we use our medical time to address the fear that has infiltrated their lives," Ofri wrote in Slate article "Should Doctors Treat Trump Anxiety?"

Ofri says she encourages them to focus on taking care of their mental and physical health, despite looming uncertainty.

"Does it seem crazy to exercise when you could be deported next week? On the one hand, yes," she says. "On the other hand, if you have high blood pressure and exercise helps to keep that from spiraling out of control … [I tell them] to focus on that."

Develop a relaxation response

Slawsby urges her patients to engage in a daily 20-minute "relaxation response" — anything from meditation to deep breathing to exercise. These activities decrease the body's production of stress hormones while releasing endorphins.

For more tips on stress relief, visit **metro.us**

7 Free Ivy League courses you could be taking right now

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From American government to artificial intelligence– there's a class for everybody.

Here are seven of our favorites that you could sign up for right now:

1 Financial Markets

Yale University
Taught by Robert Shiller, 2013 Nobel Prize winner in economic sciences, this course will discuss corporate stocks, banks and monetary policy, the theory of debt, regulation and efficient markets — to name just a few topics. Each week students will hear from business icons including David Swensen (chief investment officer at Yale University), Carl Icahn (founder and majority shareholder of Icahn Enterprises) and Larry Summers (secretary of the Treasury for President Bill Clinton and director of the National Economic Council under President Barack Obama).

2 Intro to Classical Music

Yale University
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3 American Government

Harvard University
Drawing on political science and current cases — such as the Iraq invasion and health-care reform — this class will explain how the U.S. government system works. By the end of the course students will be understand the foundations of the political system; America's economic, social and foreign policies; and how the presidency and Congress operate. They will also learn where public opinion, political parties, groups and the media fit in. This is a beginner class, so there's no need to have previously studied American politics.

4 Deliberations for Social Change

Harvard University
What does it mean to be a citizen? It means to participate in your society. In this course, students will first learn the best practices for engaging in thoughtful deliberation, as well as a brief history of the jury system, and then serve as a member of a virtual jury for a mock criminal case. As a final segment, students will view a live social issue unfolding in real time — the Massachusetts referendum for the "Legalization, Regulation, and Taxation of Marijuana" — and deliberate with their online peers through Google Hangout.

5 Entrepreneurship I: Developing the Opportunity

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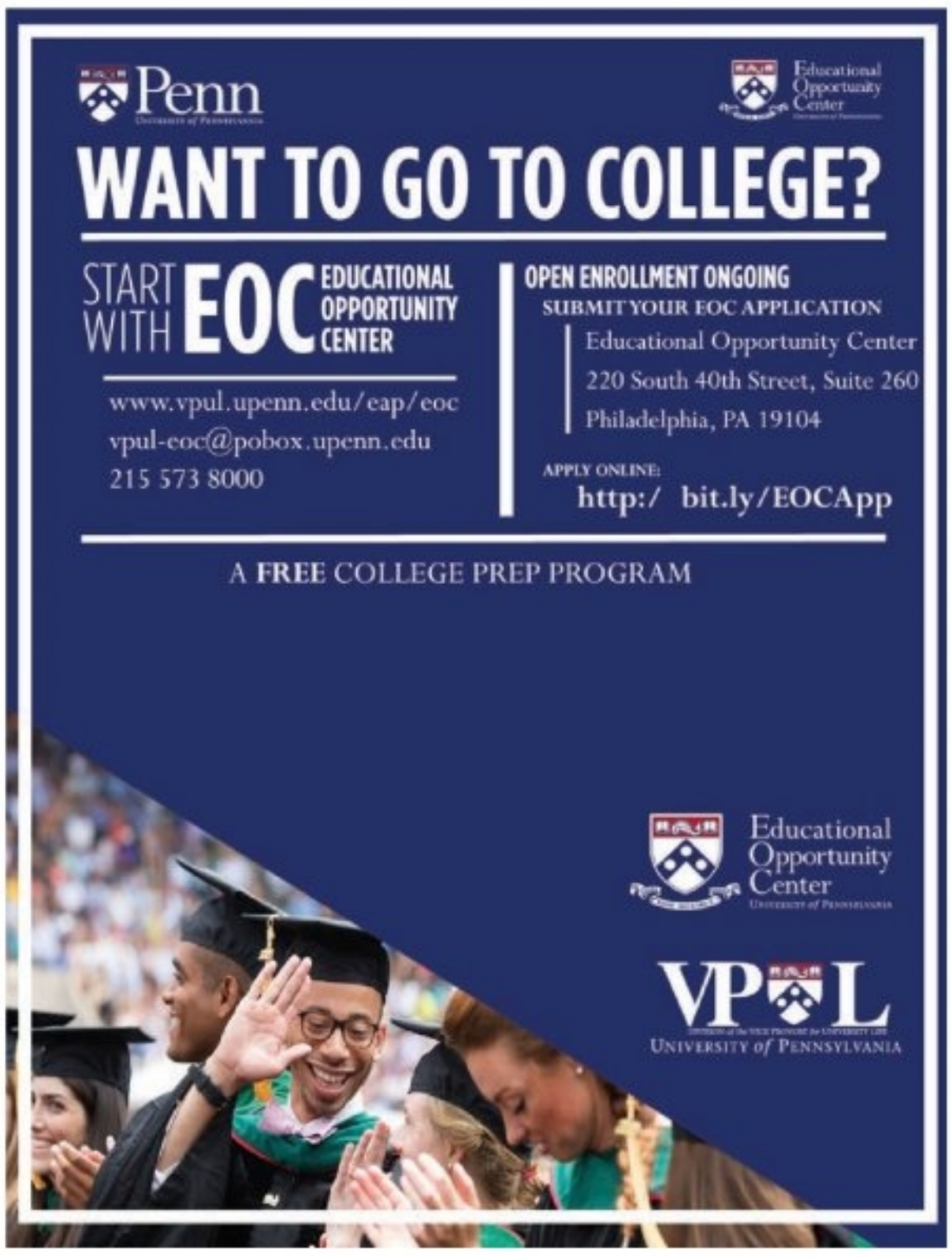
6 Buddhism & Modern Psychology

Princeton University
This course will introduce some of the basic Buddhist claims regarding the human mind — the idea that the self doesn't exist and that much of perceived reality is in some sense unreal — and break them apart under the lens of modern psychology.

7 Artificial Intelligence

Columbia University
Students will learn basic techniques for building intelligent computer systems and discusses how artificial intelligence is being used for self-driving cars, face recognition, web search, industrial robots, missile guidance, and tumor detection. They will also learn about the history of artificial intelligence and gain hands on experience by building a basic search agent.

To search for other classes you might be interested in, go to class-central.com



Why the 2017 NFL Draft's cornerback class is dream come true for Eagles

Mark this down: The Eagles will nab a much-needed corner in April's draft.

LUKE MILLER
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sports@metro.us

An elite college corner, like Florida's Teez Tabor, would be a great first round pick for the Eagles at their area of biggest need. GETTY IMAGES

This draft's cornerback class is notable for many reasons, all of which seem to line up perfectly for Philadelphia.

The Eagles desperately need help at the cornerback spot, and frankly have since Asante Samuel and Lito Sheppard roamed the sidelines. It's been well covered that the selection of first day or second day talent is extremely deep this season. That suits the Eagles needs in more ways than one. It ensures talent will be there when they pick 14th or 15th and makes it likely first-round talent at a position they need will slip into the second and maybe even third rounds.

Jumping back to that first-round pick — few cornerbacks, aside from Ohio State's Marshon Lattimore are being mocked as off the board when the Eagles pick. The upcoming combine could change a lot, but for the moment, not only will a glut of talent be available, but the Eagles may have their pick of it.

Also, for a team interested in adding more than one cornerback through the draft, like the Eagles, there are an unusual number of high profile college tandems available in the pool this year. With the possible exception of Florida's Teez Tabor and Quincy Wilson, there's usually a superior prospect, but his teammate is often far less rounds behind in projection than previous drafts have seen.

Now that Lattimore and Tabor have been mentioned, let's start with them as elite cover prospects the Eagles may be interested in.

Lattimore is a redshirt sophomore who recovered from early career hamstring problems to be All-Big Ten First Team this season for the playoff bound Buckeyes. He finished 2016 with four interceptions. At 6-foot-1, 192 he has the size, speed, and agility to stay with receivers.

Tabor got his chance to shine outside Vernon Hargreaves shadow this season at Florida and didn't disappoint. He had four interceptions and was First-Team All-SEC for the second straight season.

At 6-foot-0, 201 pounds, Tabor's aggression will remind several Eagles fans of Jalen Mills, albeit with a few more tools in his pocket that make Tabor a first round prospect. The biggest knock on both Tabor and Lattimore might be that their coverage can get a little handsy, but in a college game called differently than the pros, that will be a critique of several players.

If you start looking at prospects that might come off the board a little later, USC's Adoree Jackson is a playmaker that could fill more than one need for the Eagles.

A 5-foot-11, 185 pound junior, Jackson won the Jim Thorpe award as the nation's best defensive back this season, was named First-Team All-America after scoring eight touchdowns, four as a kick and punt returner who could eventually succeed Darren Sproles. He's a two-time All-America in track as well who's lined up at wide receiver in the past, just in case the Eagles get really desperate.

Like Jackson, Michigan's Jourdan Lewis (5-foot-10, 188) is trending towards being undersized for an outside cornerback, but size isn't the end-all be-all it was during the Chip Kelly era. Despite missing the first three games of the season, he was named First-Team All-America as well and will probably be available come Day 2.

This doesn't even come close to capturing the breadth of talent available at the top of the draft for this position, but if you're interested in some deeper gems as well, check out Colorado's relatively new to football but talented 6-foot-3 Ahkello Witherspoon. Miami's 5-foot-9 Corn Elder is at the other end of the size spectrum, but has been compared on NFL.com withlast year's Temple prospect Tavon Young.

The Eagles spent some time interviewing deeper prospects at the all-star games too, notably San Diego State's Damontae Kazee, UCLA's Fabian Moreau and Oklahoma State's Ashton Lampkin.

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OPINION

Glen Macnow has been an outspoken voice in Philly sports for nearly three decades.
@realglenmacnow

The youthful Phillies return in 2017 with more experience, and more experienced veterans. GETTY IMAGES

You've been resilient, Phillies fans. Hanging loyal through the demise of Halladay, Utley and Howard. Mothballing those No. 6 Rollins and No. 35 Hamels jerseys when your favorite ballpark apparel became mere nostalgic keepsakes.

You gritted your teeth through Dom Brown and Ben Revere. Attended games knowing Aaron Harang and Jerome Williams would get shellacked. Hey, you survived Jonathan Papelbon.

Your reward is due.

So let me be the first to predict: The Phils will finish .500 this season.

Granted, this doesn't sound like cause for a parade. But after four years with an average of 70-92, this franchise is ready for respectability. And that's one step away from contending.

The Phils didn't have a noisy offseason. The free agents they added are solid journeymen, not stars. Even at that, corner OFs Michael Saunders and Howie Kendrick will resemble Mantle and Maris compared with last year's sad lot of Peter Bourjos, Cody Asche and Tyler Goodell. Plus, they'll give Maikel Franco lineup protection so that (presumably) he stops flailing at those low, outside curveballs.

Veteran Clay Buchholz and the returning Jeremy Hellickson should combine for 60 credible starts. Bullpen additions Joaquin Benoit and Pat Neshek will provide sanity in late innings — or perhaps become closers if Jeanmar Gomez can't hack it.

Most important, those players provide a bridge. There is impressive potential among the baby Phils already on the team or moving up the system. But, of course, potential mostly means you've not yet proven it.

So Buchholz and Hellickson toe the rubber while manager Pete Mackanin sifts through his other candidates. Jerad Eickhoff has already shown himself as a mid-rotation workhorse. Will youngsters Aaron Nola and Vince Velasquez stay healthy? Will any of the prospects — Jake Thompson, Alec Asher or Zach Eflin — announce their presence with authority?

It's the same on offense. Saunders and Kendrick aren't here for the long term. Rather, they're transition players as talent percolates up the system. And they're far better complimentary pieces than the slop you've watched in recent years.

Yes, there are question marks throughout the lineup. Franco has to rebound. Odubel Herrera has to produce from April through September. Tommy Joseph was productive as a platoon player who aims to show he deserves to play every day. Cesar Hernandez has to put his head in gear with the rest of his talented tools.

Mostly, I'm eager to see CF Roman Quinn become the next Shane Victorino. To watch rocket-armed catcher Jorge Alfaro blast homers over the LF wall. To see J.P. Crawford and Nick Williams come up this summer — and stay up.

It won't all work out, of course. It never does. But we've seen the convergence of rising talent twice in this city — the mid-'70s Schmidt-Bowa-Luzinski group and the more recent Rollins-Utley-Howard generation. Both won World Series.

That's a long way away — if, in fact, it happens with this group. But for 2017, a .500 record is a fine achievement. And it's doable, whatever the bloviating windbag Chris Christie may think.

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Packers, Colts and Ravens could be interested in trading for Barwin

The Eagles could get a mid-round draft pick for the pass rusher.

EVAN MACY
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Connor Barwin has shown he is a much better player in a 3-4 defensive scheme. GETTY IMAGES

After having a career year in Chip Kelly's 3-4 defense in 2015, collecting 14.5 sacks and 64 tackles, Connor Barwin's production has decreased as the Eagles have changed over to a 4-3 scheme.

Barwin is still a very much desired and talented 30-year-old pass rusher, but with his $7.75 million salary due in 2017 and relatively small $600,000 dead money hit, he is a candidate to be cut as the Eagles look for money to address weak spots at cornerback and wide receiver.

The team is rich in pass rushers, boasting Pro Bowler Fletcher Cox as well as Brandon Graham and Vinny Curry and can afford to lose Barwin if they need to.

But they would much prefer to trade him. And according to ESPN and NJ.com, there are several teams interested including the Colts, Packers and Ravens. All three of those teams have 3-4 defensive schemes.

Barwin is due even more money, $10.25 million in 2018, so any taker would need to renegotiate his contract moving forward. But facing a possible cut, Barwin would likely be open to it.

The defensive end/linebacker has been an outspoken and popular member of the Philadelphia community, famously taking SEPTA to work every single day and raising money for local progressive causes. He would be dearly missed in the Philly area if he did depart.

Barwin could probably net the Eagles a mid- to late-round draft pick.

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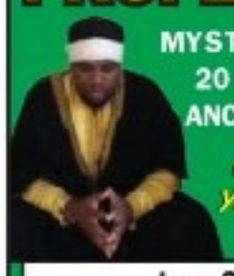

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Notice is hereby given that TECH Freire Charter School has released Request for Proposals (RFP) for WAN, Internet Access and other services. Details and service levels are identified within the formal posted RFPs. Interested Respondents must have an E-rate SPIN number and abide by the response directions in accordance with the RFPs and supporting documentation. Complete responses must be received on or before 10:00 A.M. E.S.T. on March 3, 2017. To receive a copy of the RFPs view the website www.intelafunds.net and select the "E-Rate" tab then "Bid Opportunities" then select the RFP/service quote requests documents of interest posted for this school.

CAREER TRAINING

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Is Having an OPEN HOUSE

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www.philaoic.org

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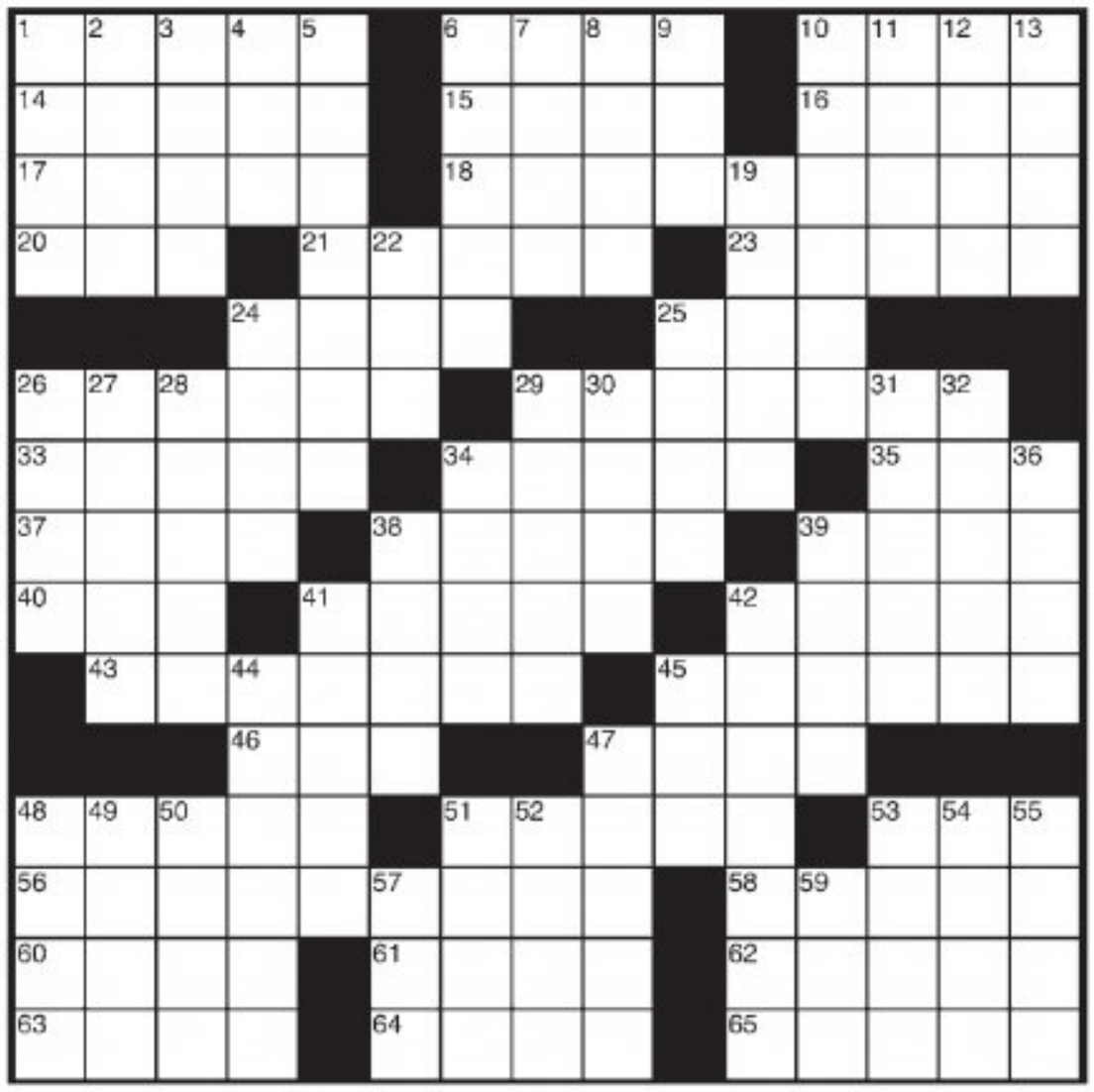

Across
1 Pantyhose brand
6 Three tsps.
10 Come unglued
14 Long, flat timber
15 Aspiration
16 Say for sure
17 Frosty
18 Together again
20 Eur. airline
21 Borg of tennis
23 Feline nine
24 Let slip
25 Sci. class
26 Food for tots
29 Treat a wound
33 Raise spirits
34 Yet to come
35 Med. plan
37 Clark and Orbison
38 Zones
39 Develop
40 Famous numero
41 Boring tool
42 Mail carrier's beat
43 Spicy candy
45 Executed poorly
46 "Gotcha!"
47 Heavy weights
48 Caused (2 wds.)
51 Bubbles up
53 Hypo units
56 Government foe
58 LPGA star Lorena --
60 About 2.2 lbs.
61 While away
62 Sulu colleague
63 Sagan's "The Dragons of --"
64 Drop anchor
65 Kitchen gadget

Down
1 RN assistants
2 Lamb's alias
3 Mountain passes
4 Economic ind.
5 Like cornflowers (2 wds.)
6 Strong beat
7 Afrikaner
8 Made a web
9 Kind of pal
10 Mete out
11 Tel --
12 Mr. Hackman
13 Joule fractions
19 Homer opus
22 Wedge in
24 Some triple-deckers
25 Lillie and Arthur
26 Amazon source
27 Beside
28 Marshy inlet
29 Twitter
30 Cordelia's dad
31 Lilac, for one
32 Wax theatrical
34 Medea sailed on her
36 Felt grateful
38 Mystique
39 Oodles
41 Committee type (2 wds.)
42 Expires (2 wds.)
44 Female prison guard
45 Benedictine title
47 Spud
48 Mirage image
49 Sooner city
50 Cartoon chipmunk
51 Mutt moniker
52 Peace Prize city
53 Buddy
54 Geologic sample
55 German industrial region
57 "She Done -- Wrong"
59 T'ai -- ch'uan

metro.us/sudoku

easy

				8			1	
			5			7	2	
3							8	5
		9	4				7	8
6	1		7		2		4	3
2	4				8	5		
1	6							4
	5	4			6			
	8			9				

hard

	5	9	4		6			
		1		8		6		
3			2				8	1
					8			
2		8	6	7	1	3		5
			5					
1	8				2			3
		3		6		2		
			8		4	9	1	

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Size up your professional position and consider how to make gains. You can garner greater approval through your response to a volatile situation. Discipline will pay off.

Taurus Try giving back to society and see what happens. Getting involved in a cause that you care about will bring you closer to a solution that serves you well.

Gemini Concentrate on how you can improve your assets in order to get ahead. Don't trust anyone to take care of your responsibilities. Use your intelligence.

Cancer Short trips that offer insight into different ways of doing things will be beneficial. Partnerships will face some hardships requiring unusual solutions.

Leo Personal improvements will give you the competitive edge and confidence you need to forge ahead. Personal gratification will be yours if you work hard.

Virgo Listen to the people you encounter at community events. Be a participant and make a difference. There are causes out there that need your help and your presence.

Libra You must take what others are telling you seriously. You stand to gain by the information you receive. Don't allow your emotions to take you in the wrong direction.

Scorpio Changes you make at home will add to your comfort and encourage you to indulge in something you've wanted to pursue for some time. Your insight will be uncanny.

Sagittarius Look beyond familiarities and delve into something that makes you more aware of the changes you want to make to improve your life and personal situation.

Capricorn If you think deeply about what's happened in the past, you will discover a way to get around a sticky situation that someone is pushing you toward.

Aquarius An opportunity will develop to make money or to invest in something that will give you greater freedom to explore your skills and talents. Time to call in favors.

Pisces Helping others without overdoing it will be difficult. Make suggestions, but don't feel obliged to shirk your responsibilities to help someone else get ahead. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

H	E	P	C	A	T		W	K	S		T	U	B	S
I	N	H	A	L	E		A	A	H		I	S	A	K
E	D	I	B	L	E		B	R	O		D	A	T	A
			B	A	N	T	A	M	W	E	I	G	H	T
A	R	K	I	N		E	S	A		G	E	E	S	E
M	O	U	E		H	A	H		J	R	S			
O	D	D		Z	I	P		B	E	E	T	L	E	S
N	E	Z		O	R	O		I	R	S		Y	A	W
G	O	U	R	M	E	T		S	R	S		C	R	I
			A	B	S		T	H	Y		A	R	T	S
B	L	I	N	I		B	I	O		B	L	A	H	S
L	I	C	K	E	T	Y	S	P	L	I	T			
O	B	I	E		E	L	S		A	D	A	P	T	S
O	R	E	S		T	A	U		V	E	R	S	U	S
M	A	R	T		E	W	E		A	S	S	I	G	N

Can't wait until tomorrow to check your answers? Visit **metro.us**

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DEPRESSED?

Are you treating your depression with medication?
Are you still feeling depressed?

If so, please call Hassman Research Institute about participating in our research study of an investigational drug for adults with treatment-resistant depression.

Qualified participants must: • Be 18 or older • Be taking prescribed antidepressant medication • Be currently experiencing a depressive episode

Insurance is not required to participate in our study, and all study-related care and study medications are provided at no charge.

Transportation and compensation up to $7,500 for time and travel may be available.

For more information, call toll-free 866-264-4545 or visit HRITrials.com

Important News for People with

Chronic Moderate to Severe

Psoriasis

Do you currently have moderate to severe psoriasis - thickened patches of red inflamed skin covered with a silvery white buildup of dead skin cells or "scales" that can be itchy, painful and may crack or bleed?

HASSMAN RESEARCH

is conducting a research study of an investigational medication for adults with moderate to severe psoriasis.

Qualified participants will receive:

- Study-related care
- Study-related medication at no cost

Participants may be compensated for their time and travel.

Health insurance is not needed.

Call 866-303-2626

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Do you have a rash on your body that you can't make go away? This may be atopic dermatitis, or eczema.

If so, call about our research study of an investigational drug for adults with eczema. Study participation is at no charge, and reimbursement up to $1,300 may be available. So if your rash might be atopic dermatitis or eczema.

Call 866-910-4949 or visit HRITrials.com